

North Texas Daily

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News

North Texas Daily’s Denton voter guide to constitutional amendment election



The Denton Civic Center is located at 321 E. McKinney St.
Photo by Hannah Everett

By Hannah Everett
Managing Editor

Seventeen constitutional amendments and one local school district proposition are on the ballot for the Nov. 4 election. Early voting began on Oct. 20 and will run until Oct. 31.

The 89th Legislative Session wrapped up in June. Lawmakers passed joint resolutions by a two-thirds majority, calling for voter approval on 17 amendments to the Texas constitution.

Registered voters in Denton can vote at their designated polling location from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. on election day. Voters can look up their polling location and view a sample ballot on the Denton County Elections website.

On Nov. 4, Denton will have six precinct-specific polling locations. Locations include the Denton Civic Center, South Branch Library,

Martin Luther King Jr. Recreation Center, Denton ISD Stephens Central Administration Building, Denia Recreation Center and the university’s Gateway Center.

According to the Denton County Elections website on Oct. 29, there are 667,156 registered voters in Denton County.

Denton’s last constitutional amendment was in November 2023, with a turnout of 14 percent of 621,201 registered voters. This year, the county has almost 46,000 more registered voters than the 2023 election.

The number of registered voters has increased from under 600,000 in 2020 to over 650,000 this year. During the five-year timespan, Denton’s population increased by approximately 167,000, according to a chart from Denton County.

The 2023 election had 14 constitutional amendments on the ballot, with only one failing to pass.

Of the 17 propositions on the November ballot, 10 of them include tax breaks or exemptions for Texas residents. Denton also has its own proposition on the ballot, in the form of a five-cent tax hike.

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Sports

Mean Green softball develops chemistry in fall season with new coach, play style

By Haylie Stum
Senior Sports Writer

Twenty-two girls shuffle into one room for the sole purpose of singing “Happy Birthday” to one of their own. If someone sends dinner plans in the team group chat, many jump at the chance to get together. When they have the time, one can often catch them at one of their teammates’ apartments, whether it is 9 a.m. or 5 p.m.

These may seem like small gestures to some, but in the culture of a collegiate sports team, they go a long way. For this year’s revamped North Texas softball team, the art of showing up for one another is shaping a fresh look to the program.

“We’re just bringing so much energy,” head coach Cody White said. “[...] We’re seeing our players start to do that. They’re having a lot more fun and just flying around.”

White said emerging leaders helped jumpstart the engine that drove North Texas toward the change. One of them was redshirt junior catcher Elizabeth Moffit. In her second year with the Mean Green last season, Moffit posted the third-best batting average and home runs on the team while also anchoring the defense behind home plate.

Moffit was one of a handful of players to enter the transfer portal following the resignation of former head coach Rodney Delong, a decision she described as “heartbreaking.” When the administration handed White the reins, he made many phone calls convincing those players to commit to his “vision,” one Moffit and others believed in and now work to execute.

“We’ve had a culture shift,” Moffit said. “A lot of us have just grown as people and learned so much from Coach White. I think he’s doing great things here.”

Green bracelets adorn the wrists of team members, bearing the words “own your impact,” a tangible reminder of White’s vision. Senior Britney Lewinski, a transfer pitcher from Southeastern Louisiana University, dons the bracelet with pride as the program has created a healthy environment for newcomers like her.

“He just has such high expectations for every single person and for this program,” Lewinski said. “I think he does a great job every



Head coach Cody White talks to the team after an inning during the first pitch scrimmage at Lovelace Stadium on Sept. 14, 2025.
Photo by Katie Brackens

single day, reminding us, ‘You are here for a reason. If you were not great, you would not be here.’”

White took over as the program’s new head coach on May 29 after spending 12 seasons leading the University of Central Oklahoma’s softball team. During his time in Edmond, Oklahoma, he accumulated the most wins as a coach in UCO history and helped the Bronchos appear in 10 NCAA Division II tournaments.

“There’s so much momentum going with the softball program here,” White said. “I walked into a great situation, [and] we’re just going to keep going that direction [...] It’s been a transition and a different style, and these last two weeks, they’ve really adopted that style, and we’ve seen great results from it. They bought into it, it’s just now doing it.”

When White arrived in Denton, he assessed the squad as talented but with “more of a methodical approach,” a contrast to the kind of team he looks to showcase at Lovelace Stadium.

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Arts & Life



Director Gracie May records a scene for their film “The Final Act” during the 48 Hours of Hell Horror Video Race at the university CVAD Lighting Studio on Oct. 23, 2025. Photo by Sophia Carbajal

Thin Line Fest hosts short horror film competition

By Sophia Carbajal
Senior Arts & Life Writer

Inside the Big Top Tent on a Sunday evening, teams of filmmakers watched as a dozen or so horror films were played back-to-back. Some were terrifying, some funny, but all were made by the attendees present in the crowd.

The teams of filmmakers created each horror short film in just 48 hours. One of these teams, a group of six university students called Pineapple Pizza, spent hours between jobs and classes to create their film. Junior and new media art major Gracie May served as the group’s main videographer.

“This whole competition has resparked this creative flame in me, and I hope by challenging myself with these competitions, I can keep that flame going,” May said. “The joy of adrenaline rushes and experimental filming is too good to pass up.”

The video competition began days earlier, on Wednesday, Oct. 22, at the Denton County Courthouse lawn in downtown Denton, which served as the races’ starting line, where 14 teams of artists, filmmakers and horror fanatics gathered at 9 p.m. The “48 Hours of Hell

Horror Video Race” was brought back from the dead by Denton music, film and photography organization Thin Line Fest, which has hosted the event intermittently since 2008.

The competition’s rules were simple: create a four to eight-minute horror film based on four required elements: a subgenre of horror, filming location, prop and a line of dialogue that each team drew at random before the start of the race on Wednesday night. The race ran from 9 p.m. on Wednesday to 9 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 24, and any team that did not include all four elements or turn in their film on time was disqualified.

Though the rules were straightforward, creating a short film in just two days proved complicated. Two members of Pineapple Pizza, graphic design sophomore Patti Livingston and new media art junior Nia Bengtzen, drew the prompt slasher, the location of theater or stage, the prop of a body bag and the quote “You’re doomed. You’re all doomed,” from the film “Friday the 13th” (1980).

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The Trump administration is misusing military assets and materials

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Democratic candidates answer questions at forum ahead of March 2026 election

By Shehzil Imran
News Editor

The UNT College Democrats hosted a democratic candidate forum ahead of the March 2026 primary election, asking candidates to clarify their platform and how they plan to help Texans, Denton residents and university students.

The full forum is available online at UNT College Democrats' YouTube channel, and another forum for the Democratic attorney general candidates will be held on Nov. 9.

Nick Pappas for Texas governor

A Marine veteran and Lewisville resident, Pappas described his platform as "pro humane immigration reform, pro women and LGBTQ rights, pro gun and pro background checks."

Pappas said one of the first things he would set his eyes on is improving the Texas economy by "taxing the rich" and instituting a minimum wage of \$25. Additionally, Pappas said education is one of his main priorities, which he would reform through an executive order.

With the university receiving an "F" rating on free speech by the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression in September, UNT College Democrats Chairman and forum moderator AJ Perez asked Pappas what he would do as Texas governor to protect the freedom of speech for students and activists statewide.

Pappas said the solution would be through an amendment to the Texas Constitution rather than an executive order.

"Obviously, we've seen a big crackdown on that in recent years," Pappas said in his answer. "Ensuring we actually have an amendment to the Constitution that would ensure that the government cannot institute any policies against freedom of speech. We want to make sure that the Texas Executive Office, the Judicial Office and the legislative offices cannot institute policies that would infringe on freedom of speech in any way, shape or form."

Benjamin Flores for land commissioner

Originally running for governor, Flores, a Bay City Council member and Development Corporation Board member, said he decided to switch his candidacy to land commissioner because, while touring the state, the majority of the time he dealt with the public through public education.

When it comes to energy resources, the Texas Land Commissioner and General Land Office is responsible for managing 13 million acres of state-owned land. If Flores becomes commissioner, he said he intends to work on improving public education, overseeing veteran benefits and exploring more partnerships with geothermal, wind and solar energy.

Perez asked Flores what about the job of land commissioner impacts college students across Texas most directly. Flores mentioned the Texas Permanent School Fund,

saying the proper financial support will better schools and help Texans and students in the long run.

"From the cradle to—I don't want to say it but—death, how can we help out throughout," Flores said. "If we have better schools from the get-go, all throughout, we're incentivising the right things for us. Honestly, I think there's a little bit of something for everybody at every single state [...] I think it's a lack of imagination [from] our current set of politicians in charge."

Vikki Goodwin for lieutenant governor

State Rep. Goodwin was unable to attend the forum, but sent university alumna and staffer Georgiana Bustos to represent her. Additionally, Goodwin sent in a video summarizing her platform, in which she said she wants to invest billions of dollars in public education rather than vouchers.

Goodwin said she wants to address healthcare, saying that "it has gotten more expensive to buy health insurance," and Texas has the highest percentage of uninsured people. Goodwin said she also wants to address women's healthcare, since Texas has one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the country.

Perez asked Bustos which one of Goodwin's policy positions would have a direct impact on college students' lives. Bustos said she thinks healthcare affects university students and recent graduates the most, as once someone turns



UNT College Democrats invited Democratic Candidates to the Union to talk about the upcoming elections on Oct. 20, 2025.

Photo by Katie Brackens

26, they can no longer be on their parents' health insurance.

"This is the one that seems to affect the younger generation the most at the beginning," Bustos said in her response. "But let's get real, every issue is going to affect you [...] we've got housing affordability, it's hard to live in a home now. What's it going to be like in five or 10 years from now?"

Ernest Lineberger for Congressional District 26

Congressional District 26 oversees Denton, Wise, Tarrant and Cooke County and is currently represented by Republican Rep. Brandon Gill. Lineberger, a Navy veteran and University of Southern California alumnus, said he believes he would be a better representative for District 26 because he feels Gill "puts out party politics" rather than focusing on the actual needs of the Texas people.

Lineberger ran for the first time in 2024, after noticing there

was no Democrat on the ballot in 2022, the first election after redistricting. With his platform, Lineberger emphasizes "turning MAGA red into red, white and blue for all people."

Similar to what Perez asked Pappas, Perez asked Lineberger what he would do to protect the academic freedom and integrity of universities in Texas and across the nation.

"Our president has just overstepped way too much on a lot of things, and the problem is [that] he is in charge of the majority Republican House," Lineberger said in his response. "They all look to him and listen to him, and it makes me sick [...] The number one thing that I'm going to be able to do personally is be a Democratic butt in a seat and hopefully swinging the majority the other way."

Editor's note: This article has been shortened for print. Read more at ntdaily.com

'It was eye-opening:' the realities of surviving domestic and intimate partner violence

By Lauren Pruett
Staff Writer

Content warning: The following story contains descriptions of domestic violence and sexual assault.

In the United States, one in four women and one in seven men have been the victim of severe physical violence by an intimate partner in their lifetime, according to data from the Centers for Disease Control's National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey.

Those numbers are higher in Texas, as one in three Texans will experience intimate partner violence during their lifetime, according to the Texas Advocacy Project.

Luna, a familial violence and sexual assault survivor and freshman at the university, only recently realized she grew up in a home with domestic violence.

"In January 2024, my mother, sister and I got out of that environment," said Luna, who requested to be identified by first name only. "I thought [domestic violence] was mostly

physical, I didn't realize it could be emotional and stuff like that. [...] I didn't realize what I went through with my other parent was considered sexual assault until I came out about everything and talked to other people about it. It was eye-opening."

Luna and her family are among the 12 million people affected by the public health crisis of domestic violence each year.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, intimate partner violence disproportionately affects women. Girls and women aged 16-24 experience the highest rates of domestic violence, almost triple the national average, according to the Texas Advocacy Project.

The Texas Commission on Family Violence found 216 Texans, 179 of them women, were killed by their intimate partners in 2022.

Five of those victims were from Denton County.

"When [victims] leave that relationship, that first year of

leaving is the most dangerous time because that's when they are most likely to be killed by that partner," said Lily Isham, the survivors' advocacy team coordinator at Denton County Friends of the Family.

In 2024, the Denton County District Attorney's office received 1,256 felony domestic violence cases and 1,868 misdemeanor domestic violence cases, according to Michael Graves, chief of the county domestic violence unit.

Graves said when he started working at the office about 13 years ago, they would receive around 300-400 felony cases per year.

Graves said the office now receives about triple that amount.

"Those numbers have been increasing since 2020," Graves said. "It does appear this year that they are starting to level off, based on the number of cases I've received so far. I mean, we're at October [...] of '25 right now. It does appear to be leveling off, but it has been a

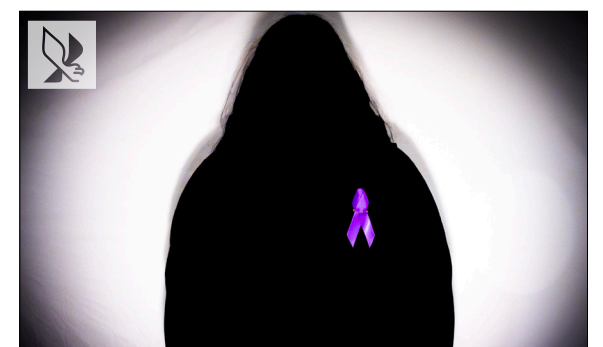


Photo Illustration by Ismael Beltran and Aiden Gonzalez

pretty, pretty dramatic increase over the years."

Luna, along with her mother and sister, made it out of their home safely and are now doing what they can to start over. However, before leaving, Luna said she was not sure they could make it on their own.

"For the longest time, I was scared that if we left [my dad], we wouldn't have financial stability and support," Luna said. "But, we are. We've left him, and we're making it through without support. I've been able to flourish as my own person.

Instead of being scared of just being in my own household or being scared of being yelled at, I can actually be who I am and express myself."

Luisa Feliz, a high-risk advocate with DCFOF, said many responses to intimate partner violence highlight a lack of understanding and harmful falsehoods victims face, especially as they try to escape their abusive situations.

Editor's note: This article has been shortened for print. Read more at ntdaily.com

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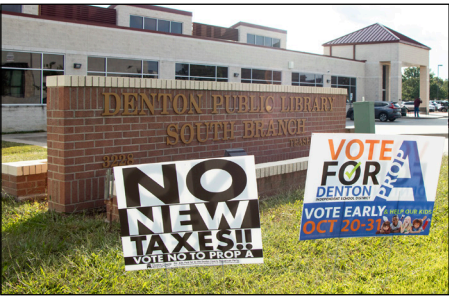
The Gateway Center is located at 801 N. Texas Blvd.
Photo by Hannah Everett



Denton ISD Stephens Central Administration Building is located at 1307 N. Locust St.
Photo by Hannah Everett



The Denia Recreation Center is located at 1001 Parvin St.
Photo by Hannah Everett



The South Branch Library is located at 3228 Teasley Ln.
Photo by Hannah Everett

Proposition A

Proposition A is a five-cent tax increase to benefit the Denton Independent School District. The district is facing a \$15 million deficit. The proposed tax rate on the ballot is \$1.2066 per \$100 of valuation for DISD, which is a 13.33 percent increase in maintenance and operations tax revenue. The 13.33 percent increase totals \$28,830,352 in additional funding for the district. According to DISD, the new funding would reverse previous budget reductions implemented in the wake of the deficit.

Proposition 1

Proposition 1 calls for the creation of an \$850 million endowment for the Texas State Technical College System. The endowment will serve as a new source of permanent funding for the college’s capital needs, with about \$40 million in additional annual funding for repairs to the college’s 11 campuses. TSTC is a coeducational two-year institution offering technical-vocational education. TSTC’s funding comes from Capital Construction Assistance Projects funding and private donations. Since the technical college is not permitted to collect tax revenue or issue bonds, the amendment seeks to create a new source of capital.

Proposition 4

Proposition 4 deals with water infrastructure and its funding. The amendment would allow for \$1 billion of sales tax revenue per fiscal year, after exceeding \$46.5 billion, to be allocated to the state water fund. The amendment also includes authorization of the state legislature, by a two-thirds vote, to adjust the allocation amount. Texas’ water supply is under increasing demand due to population growth, climate change, and millions of gallons of water leaking from aging water infrastructure.

Proposition 7

A tax exemption for veterans’ spouses is on the ballot as Proposition 7. The amendment would allow spouses of deceased veterans who died in the line of duty to receive a property tax exemption. The exemption would be on all or part of the market value of the homestead.

Proposition 9

Proposition 9, another tax exemption amendment, allows the state legislature to exempt \$125,000 of businesses’ personal tangible property, such as equipment or inventory, from being taxed. Under the proposition, the state would make up the amount of property tax revenue lost from local school districts. Currently, Texas businesses do not have to pay property taxes on property valued at less than \$2,500.

Proposition 12

Proposition 12 would allow the state to make changes to judicial oversight policies. The changes include the composition of the 13-member state Commission on Judicial Conduct and the creation of tribunal reviews of the commission’s recommendations. The amendment also provides state authority and processes for sanctioning and removing judges.

Proposition 15

Proposition 15 concerns parental rights and would affirm parents as the primary decision-makers for their children. The Texas Constitution would be amended to include language affirming that parents have a “responsibility to nurture and protect the parent’s child and the corresponding fundamental right to exercise care, custody, and control of the parent’s child, including the right to make decisions concerning the child’s upbringing.” Critics, such as LGBTQ+ advocacy groups, worry the amendment’s broad language will be used to restrict access to gender-affirming and reproductive care for minors.

Proposition 2

Proposition 2 aims to ban Texas from taxing people and businesses on profits from capital assets such as real estate, investments and specific personal property. The amendment would also remove a franchise tax on business trusts.

Proposition 5

Another tax cut on the ballot is Proposition 5, which exempts animal feed from taxes. The proposition allows tax exemptions on animal feed when it is inventory being sold. Currently, animal feed is often tax-exempt when it is purchased or harvested by a farmer or rancher. The exemption would have a minimal financial impact, according to the state Legislative Budget Board, if animal feed would be exempt from property taxes. This would lower local property tax revenue and require state assistance to make up the difference for affected school districts.



Martin Luther King Jr. Recreation Center is located on 1300 Wilson St. **Photo by Hannah Everett**

Proposition 10

This tax exemption proposition would create a process to temporarily lower property taxes for homes destroyed by fire. Under Proposition 10, homeowners could apply for an adjusted tax bill on the home for the year the fire occurred after it is restored. The home would have to be uninhabitable for at least 30 days after the fire for the homeowner to qualify for the tax exemption.

Proposition 13

Proposition 13 offers homeowners a tax exemption, which helps fund public schools. Currently, homeowners are eligible for a \$100,000 tax exemption, which will increase to \$140,000 if the proposition passes. Proposition 13 is yet another tax-exemption amendment that will require the state to fill the funding gap. In the case of Proposition 13, the state will be responsible for approximately \$2.7 billion in the 2026-27 fiscal year and \$1 billion annually thereafter.

Proposition 16

Proposition 16 would add language to the state’s constitution, stating “persons who are not citizens of the United States” cannot vote in Texas. Currently, U.S. citizenship is required to vote in the state, but the amendment aims to prevent noncitizens from voting in local elections.

Proposition 3

The amendment, Proposition 3, would require judges to deny bail to individuals accused of specific felonies when the state demonstrates that bail is insufficient to prevent the accused from being a flight risk or a public safety risk. Felonies where judges could deny bail include murder, aggravated assault, human trafficking and indecency with a child.

Proposition 6

Proposition 6 would prevent the legislature from imposing new taxes on securities transactions, such as stock trading, or on financial institutions, brokers and dealers. The creation of the Texas Stock Exchange prompted the amendment. Financial firms and investors raised about \$120 million to create the Texas-based private stock market exchange. The exchange received approval from the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission in September and is headquartered in Dallas.

Proposition 8

Proposition 8 would prohibit lawmakers from imposing death taxes on estates, inheritances, legacies, successions or gifts. Texas does not currently have any such taxes, so the amendment aims to prevent any from being imposed in the future. The proposition also includes that no tax be imposed on an estate or inheritance when it is transferred, including unpaid property taxes.

Proposition 11

Proposition 11 offers a school tax exemption for older adults and disabled homeowners. This amendment extends the current homestead exemption from \$10,000 to \$60,000 of taxable value for the homes of older adults and disabled individuals.

Proposition 14

Relating to research, Proposition 14 would provide \$3 billion from the state’s general fund for the study of dementia, Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s disease and other brain conditions. The amendment would create the Dementia Prevention and Research Institute of Texas to research brain conditions and diseases. The proposition, if passed, would give the institute \$3 billion, followed by an additional \$300 million annually.

Proposition 17

Proposition 17 is the last tax exemption proposition and final amendment on the ballot would allow the legislature to exempt from taxation any increase in property value in counties bordering Mexico. The proposition states that the exemption would result from the construction or installation of border security infrastructure.



University students create horror short film for 48 Hours of Hell Video Race

HORROR continued from page 1

After brief instructions and celebrations from Thin Line Fest representatives, the 48-hour timer began and each team ran off in all directions, ready to start brainstorming. Livingston and Bengtzen met up with their teammates in the university art building to create their story idea.

The group was most excited about the slasher subgenre, an element many members hoped they would draw on so they could have plenty of opportunities for blood and gore. Livingston said the group decided to run with this dramatic style by implementing theatrical masks and dramatic character deaths.

"We were trying to figure out what to do, and we were going through different slashers and stuff, and someone brought up the idea of doing more of a theater performance, like Shakespeare, because [the theme] was the stage or theater," Livingston said. "Honestly, I kind of blacked out, and I think once that was mentioned, the ideas really started to flow."

Titled "The Final Act," the six-minute film is a meta, or self-referencing, story that follows a group of college students creating a movie based on figures from Greek mythology. The characters are killed off one by one by the killer, played by Bengtzen, each dying in ways reminiscent of legends in Greek mythology. For example, when a cut to his heel fatally wounds Achilles, or Icarus falls from the sky.

With the idea curated, the students worked until about 2 a.m. on Thursday, drawing storyboards, writing the script, gathering materials and filming

establishing shots. The group met again at around 3 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 23, in the university CVAD sculpture room, where they started to create props like a spear, shield and slasher mask made from white and black-painted plaster.

One of the team's favorite parts of the filming process was integrating practical effects into each death scene. Sculpture senior Tiana Farina cut open a pumpkin and mixed the innards with fake blood to create a sticky consistency made to look like spilled guts.

Livingston played the role of the Greek mythological figure Medea, who, in the film, is poisoned and stabbed by the killer. This scene is one of the longer segments of the video and took over two hours to film. May served as the main director, telling each team member how to move throughout the set and suggesting how to deliver lines.

While some scenes took hours, others were shot on the first try. May said the short deadline was a big challenge for the team, since they could not afford to redo every shot or get distracted by small details.

"I had to keep reminding myself that we were on a time crunch, and I had no time to be a perfectionist," May said. "It definitely didn't leave as much room for creative adjustments that sometimes just happen in the moment. Instead, we just had to go in with a plan, shoot it and move on and just kind of hope it works."

The team finished all of their filming around 2 a.m. on Friday. The team spent all of Friday afternoon and evening editing video clips together, color correcting film, adding sound effects and title cards before successfully submitting the film.



Actors from Pineapple Pizza work on a scene for their film "The Final Act" during the 48 Hours of Hell Horror Video Race at the university CVAD Lighting Studio on Oct. 23, 2025.

Photo by Sophia Carbajal

New media art senior Trenton Kaehlert contributed to the tedious 10-hour editing process. Kaehlert said he has made short films before, but never one with such a short deadline.

"I'm just very happy that it got done and that we were able to do it despite all of the rain and every other circumstance pushing us back," Kaehlert said.

Due to a storm on Friday night, each team sent their films electronically to Thin Line Fest. The free public screening of the videos was initially scheduled for Friday night, but was instead rescheduled to Sunday, Oct. 26.

After approximately an hour and a half of watching horror films, Thin Line Fest representatives announced the grand winner, a group of three called The Worst Case, who won professional headphones

and a gift card to MID49, a film equipment website. The second-place winner was Funeral Vacation, and the third-place winner was Camran, whose members each won VIP passes to Thin Line Festival in March 2026.

Though the six university students did not win the competition, each team member said they mainly wanted their video shown alongside the other groups. Despite all the setbacks, challenges and time constraints, Kaehlert said he loved creating the film with his peers.

"Obviously, at the end of the day, there's always going to be stuff that I'm just like 'Oh, wish that could've been better,' just because it's stuff that I helped make, and I'm always really critical of what I make," Kaehlert said. "So, I like looking back at it. I'm proud of what we did."

Things To Do:

TRANS PRIDE FEST

When: Saturday, Nov. 1 at 5 p.m.
Where: Rubber Gloves Rehearsal Studios, 411 E. Sycamore St.
What: Trans Pride Fest returns at Rubber Gloves Rehearsal Studios, where the venue invites attendees to celebrate Denton's local trans community with a showcase of musicians, bands and DJs across three stages. Tickets are \$15.

Mysteries of Your Brain Planetarium Showing at UNT Sky Theater

When: Saturday, Nov. 1 at 11:30 p.m.
Where: UNT Sky Theatre, 1704 W. Mulberry St.
What: Together with a tour guide, attendees are invited to zoom along the paths of neurons, fly through brains and experience illusions on a grand scale. The event offers those who pay the \$5 fee to learn how your brain works in the university planetarium. The show length is 23 minutes.

Karaoke Night with the Murphy's

When: Tuesday, Nov. 4 at 7 p.m.
Where: The Lake Haus, 3350 Unicorn Lake Blvd.
What: For residents interested in singing the night away, The Lake Haus invites attendees to use their four wireless mics. Attendance is free.

Coffee & Canvases

When: Tuesday, Nov. 4 at 7 p.m.
Where: Hawaii Fluid Art Denton, 1507 S. Loop 288 Suite 202
What: Hawaii fluid art invites attendees to take a fluid art class. There are many options to choose from other than canvases such as charcuterie boards, glass painting, decorative wooden shapes, tumblers, wine glasses and more.

Denton's Day of the Dead festival celebrates 15 years

**By Caitlyn Ybarra/
Matthew Winter**

Staff Writer/ Arts & Life/The Dose Editor

On its 15th anniversary, Denton's Day of the Dead festival featured various events that stretched across Denton's Downtown Square, ranging from live bands to a nighttime parade.

The first event of Oct. 25, the annual Coffin Race, took place on the second day of the festival. The race featured coffins that were made into racecars to soar down Hickory Street. With 70 teams competing, each racer was guaranteed two races, with the fastest time logged determining who would make the top 32.

Dressed like the Mad Hatter, a character from "Alice in Wonderland" (1951), Denton resident and seven-year racer Wade Hatter broke down what goes into constructing a successful car for the sloped track.

"We're always looking and trying to justify weight versus lightness," Hatter said. "If it's lighter off the line, it's easier to push, but it doesn't gather speed, so you need weight for it to gather speed going down the hill, so we've gone back and forth."

Hatter was no stranger to the race's history of crashes and took this unfortunate possibility into account when constructing his cart.

"[My cart] is more sturdy, so when I hit the hay bales, it doesn't explode," Hatter said. "It's a lot safer for me. For everybody

else, that remains to be seen."

Second round racer Eric Parker from the North Texas Ghostbusters, partnering with their sponsor, Discover Denton, set aside any thoughts of crashes despite one driver's experience of flipping over during the race.

"I just push it out of my mind and focus on the finish line," Parker said.

Rather than fearing the possibility of flipping over, Parker focused his attention on the pavement ahead while awaiting a push-off from a fellow Ghostbuster.

"Go straight, go fast, that's the only thing I want," Parker said.

For Judy Neubauer, the racer and constructor of her car, Freddy, her goals focused on fun and family rather than competition. She attended her first race pregnant as an audience member and has since had her son watching from the sidelines each year she competed.

Taking only a week to build her cart, Neubauer drew inspiration from combining her fascination for the race with her video game interests.

"The design comes from the Five Nights at Freddy's universe," Neubauer said. "I've had an obsession with the character Roxanna Wolf. She runs the go-kart track, so I thought it would be a fun thing to combine."

For many racers, the races posed as an opportunity to advertise their business. Stephania Smith, racer and owner of Soaping up Life, had her car,

Bubble Trouble, designed to resemble a shopping cart with a skeleton taking a bubble bath in the back.

"I love all the holidays," Smith said. "I love dressing up and all the festivities that go on, and I thought, 'Why not come and help promote the soap and have some fun doing a cart?'"

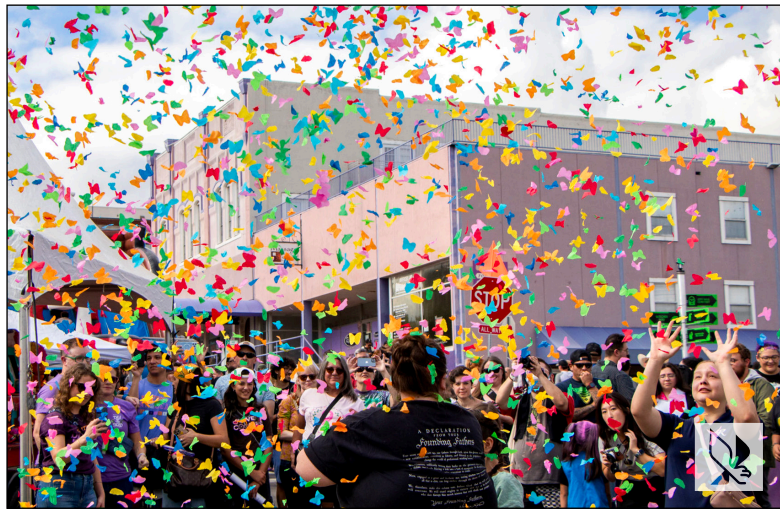
Ultimately, Gillean Brothers Roofing and their car, Green Machine, earned the first-place trophy.

The next event of the day was the Flight of Souls, a core part of Denton's Day of the Dead celebration, according to their website.

Flight of Souls was originally organized by Laura Gonzales, fellow board member and puppet constructor. Since its debut in 2019, the event has evolved from releasing over 100 live monarch butterflies to audience members popping over 20 handheld confetti cannons. A countless number of butterfly-shaped biodegradable confetti were launched via a leaf blower into the audience as well.

As the crowd positioned itself next to the dance stage, thousands upon thousands of the butterfly-shaped confetti rained down on them. Some people cried, some laughed and almost all looked up at the colors in awe.

Beside the crowd sat an ofrenda, an altar traditionally built for Día de Los Muertos to honor the spirits of deceased loved ones, where attendees could offer something to their passed loved ones. Right before the confetti flew along Oak Street, two pastors were invited to say a traditional prayer for souls.



Attendees watch confetti fall from the sky during the Flight of Souls event on Oct. 25, 2025. **Photo by Matthew Winter**

After the confetti was launched, Dallas-Fort Worth mariachi group Mariachi Quetzal performed in the street among the fallen confetti. Illuminating the end of Saturday's festivities, paper mache puppets of nocturnal animals found in Texas and Mexico hovered over the Twilight Lantern and Costume Parade's crowd.

Lucinda Breeding-Gonzales, Denton resident and secretary and parade/community ofrenda co-chair for Denton's Day of the Dead Festival, said the tradition traces back to a desire to create something that could be easily destroyed.

"It's important to us that we build with materials that can burn to ash, just like the

human body," Breeding-Gonzales said.

Relying almost entirely on paper materials to get that effect, construction for the small volunteer team posed various obstacles.

Gonzales said they must be careful to stay within their budget. While balancing their full-time day jobs, the built-from-scratch puppets take seven months to create. Maximizing their short life span, puppets from previous years are typically repurposed once or twice before they are destroyed.

"There's a lot of sketching, then usually we just start making because we're not artists at all," Breeding-Gonzales said. "There's a lot of cussing, there's a lot of doing things wrong and doing something different."

Nightmare on Brew Street's fourth year brings Halloween festivities and music to Denton County Brewing Company

By Noor Shaikh
Staff Writer

Lightning gleams in the sky for a moment as people dressed in vibrant costumes walk about inside the Denton County Brewing Company, with golden lights illuminating the space where attendees dance to blaring music.

The fourth annual Nightmare on Brew Street was held on Friday, Oct. 24, from 7-11 p.m., and was hosted by the Denton Art & Performance Collab, a local creative event-planning organization.

The evening included spooky vendors, a costume contest, a performance by actor and designer Catrina Bones and live music from local bands Primish, The Bom Bom Boms and Dead Week.

"I think it's really good Friday night plans," said Alex Lawrence, Texas Woman's University middle school education sophomore. "It's really nice to be able to go and do something and not sit at home on a Friday night and be bored, and to go see live music, support vendors in the area and just have a good time with everybody."

Lawrence, a musician himself, said when someone plays for an audience that does not care to be at the front or is not enthusiastic, it can be difficult for the performer.

That was not the case on Friday. Many attendees not only shared their enthusiasm for the performers but did so in full costume.

"I always look forward to the costume contest, it's a lot of fun," Ali Puckett, Denton resident and DAPC co-founder, said. "We



An attendee takes a photo of Jennifer Cisneros in her Day of the Dead La Catrina dress during the Nightmare on Brew Street event at the Denton County Brewing Company on Oct. 24, 2025.

Photo by Trennt Rhea

usually get a lot of entries, and it notoriously rains on Day of the Dead weekend, and we are looking at rain this weekend. So we have an indoor event, which is great to get a huge crowd inside because people are looking for spaces to go party inside."

The DAPC lined up judges for the costume contest who Puckett picked herself. The judging took place after 9 p.m. with onlookers cheering for all the participants, whose costumes included an Ice King from "Adventure

Time" (2010), a Power Ranger and more. The contestants then formed a conga line, which is a Nightmare on Brew Street tradition.

Nightmare on Brew Street was held on the first night of Denton's Day of the Dead Festival, which Puckett said has always been the case. Holding the event on the Friday before the festival weekend allows DAPC to capture run-over traffic from the Day of the Dead event, which finishes in the evening.

"What brings me here is to enjoy the people and to know friends," said Bethany, Oklahoma, resident Jennifer Cisneros, who performed as Catrina Bones. "They say wherever you go, if you meet people, new people, you open more doors for whatever you want to do in the future."

Cisneros has been performing as La Catrina, the skeletal icon and symbol of Día de los Muertos, as Catrina Bones since the COVID-19 pandemic. She sings a variety of songs in Spanish, but she said

singing Cumbia songs, a Latin American musical genre and dance originating from the Caribbean coast of Colombia, is her favorite.

Cisneros hand-made a Chantico dress that represents the Aztec goddess of fire. She hand-sews all of her dresses and also does her own makeup. She said she accepted the invite to Nightmare on Brew Street this year because there are beautiful people around Denton, and the event turned out to be a wonderful experience for her.

"[This] is just a really popular event, and everybody likes a reason to dress up," Puckett said. "And honestly, Halloween's my favorite season, time of the year, and [time] to do all of the spooky stuff, so that's why we do it every year."

Nightmare on Brew Street was part of Denton's 31 Days of Halloween, and Puckett said the event fit with the Day of the Dead weekend. With Denton named the Halloween capital of Texas in July, Puckett said they think the month-long initiative has spurred more event attendance, particularly among families.

The goals of the event encompassed creating a fun atmosphere and having a big costume contest, said Puckett. She said she thinks what sets this event apart from others is its consistency every year and that it gives people something to look forward to.

"I think it fits in with the community, because it is the community, right?" Lawrence said. "[...] you've got everybody from the community coming for something different but staying for something else."

Under the lights, drag artists find power in performance

By Caitlyn Ybarra
Staff Writer

Dancing upon tabletops wearing custom-made costumes with sequins and elaborate makeup,

a wave of colors and the click of heels filled the air.

Taking Harvest House's stage were three drag artists, Kalysta Kaykes, Echo Kaykes and Layla Monroe. The carnival-themed drag show was Toxic Productions' first since moving to Texas

and took place Oct. 23, a day before their first anniversary in the state.

"When most people think of drag, they think [...] lots of rhinestones and glitter and dancing and splits. Not what I do," said Kalysta Kaykes, Denton resident and co-owner of the production company. "Alternative drag is a little bit more darker colors, punky, edgy, a very raw form of drag."

Kalysta and Echo Kaykes aimed to deliver a more alternative-leaning show rather than what is commonly featured on TV. While Kalysta Kaykes' drag origins trace back to RuPaul's Drag Race, a sword swallowing act they performed demonstrated a stray from what is typically expected at a drag show.

"I do a lot more sideshow performances like fire eating and a bed of nails, things like that," Kalysta Kaykes said. "I was looking for a drag scene that was more like me, so I started my own."

This alternative style allowed the artists to stay true to themselves while still delivering performances that left audience members waving money in the air.

"We got the glitz and glam, but we've got the filth," Echo Kaykes said. "We definitely incorporated a lot of elements into the show to kind of meet the audience's wants, as well as our own. We like to be shapeshifters."

For Layla Monroe, who delivered a highly energetic and animated performance of Michael Jackson's "Thriller" (1982), alternative drag has always been their favorite.

"Alternative drag, that's where my heart was before I started [traditional drag]," Layla Monroe said. "So every time I get to do it I'm like, 'Oh, I get to go extra hard.'" The alternative approach allowed the artists to experiment and be at their most expressive under the rainbow LED spotlights.

"I'm a little more reserved in my day-to-day life," Echo Kaykes said. "I'm definitely a people person, I love to talk your ear off, but I kind of keep my fun side deep down. When I get to step foot on stage, it's a whole new side of me."

Echo Kaykes' performances glowed with confidence as she fused humor and interacted with the crowd. For her, she said drag invites a surge of creativity she utilizes when taking the stage.

"My fantasy world comes to fruition, and it's really an amazing time being able to do that and all the crazy things that live in my tiny mind and put them on stage," Echo Kaykes said.

In the audience were Kalysta Kaykes' employees from their day job, working as a Massage Envy clinic manager. Despite seeing Kalysta Kaykes at work every day, many had never been to a drag show before their boss's. Kalysta Kaykes said they appreciated the acceptance they felt from their co-workers, which further fueled their electric performances.

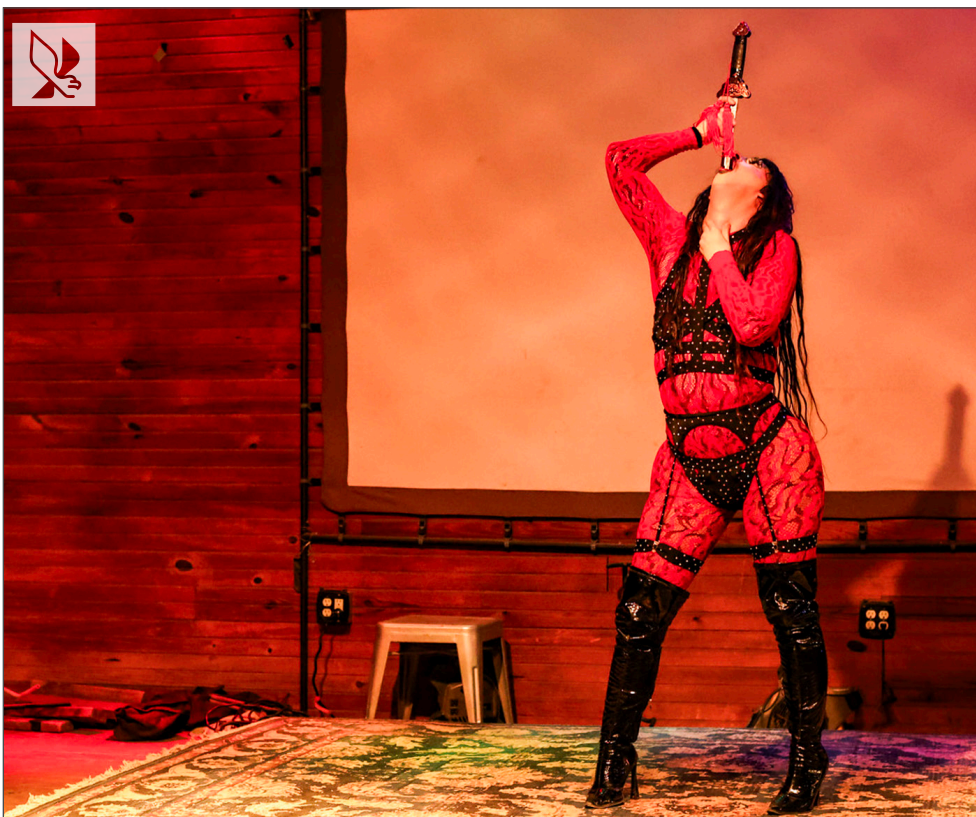
"When I'm on stage as Kalysta, I just feel quite literally unstoppable and like nothing is holding me back," Kalysta Kaykes said.

Beyond the boost of confidence drag gives, Echo and Kalysta Kaykes take pride in what they believe their shows stand for.

"It's not easy to get up here and do what we do [...] doing [drag] is a small step for these people in the audience to be more comfortable with themselves," Echo Kaykes said. "I think it's just opening those doors for others to realize you don't have to stay in a small box, you can expand."

Kalysta Kaykes added that by taking the stage, they could use their platform for good and to take a political stance.

"Drag is political, I love that about it," Kalysta Kaykes said. "Anytime now I am in drag, I'm standing up for the entire queer community."



Drag artist Kalysta Kaykes performs a sword-swallowing act during Toxic Productions' debut Denton show at Harvest House on Oct. 23, 2025.

Photo by Dilip Devanda

Top 10 frighteningly good Halloween songs

By Riley Morgan
Staff Writer

Whether played on the radio, streamed through a pair of headphones or blasted from speakers at a party, there is nothing that sets the mood like great music, and the Halloween season has plenty of it.

From lyrics about ghouls and goblins to spine-chilling instrumentals, here is a list of songs that perfectly capture the Halloween spirit.

“Heads Will Roll (A-Trak Remix)” - Yeah Yeah Yeahs and A-Trak

While the original “Heads Will Roll” is enough of a Halloween classic on its own, nothing gets the blood pumping like this remix by Canadian DJ and producer A-Trak. The Yeah Yeah Yeahs lead vocalist, Karen O, delivers a haunting performance with her semi-

slurred delivery and shivering vocals, which are mainly present during the track’s first and second verses.

“Somebody’s Watching Me” - Rockwell

This ‘80s Motown classic has been a Halloween staple for decades, and it is clear why. Rockwell’s full commitment to the bit, eerie lyrics referencing “Psycho” (1960) and “The Twilight Zone” (1959) and an uncredited but not secret feature from Michael Jackson come together to make one of the best Halloween songs of all time.

“Bloody Mary” - Lady Gaga

It was not until November 2022, with Netflix’s release of “Wednesday,” that this Lady Gaga deep cut, initially released in 2011, became synonymous with all things spooky. The track blends

moody vocals with religious imagery, creating a song that is both creepy and catchy.

“There Will Be Blood” - Kim Petras

No modern artist has made more Halloween songs than Kim Petras, who has an entire album project dedicated to the holiday featuring 18 tracks. The album’s standout among these is “There Will Be Blood.” The track features ominous lyrics like “run for your life” and “you’re gonna die,” set to a bass-heavy instrumental that begs to be danced to.

“Monster Mash” - Bobby “Boris” Pickett & The Crypt-Kickers

This self-described “graveyard smash” has been a pillar of Halloween since its 1962 debut. The track includes campy references to vintage horror literary icons like Dr. Frankenstein, Igor, Wolfman and more, delivered in an endearing Dracula impression from Pickett.

“Calling All the Monsters” - China Anne McClain

Disney Channel has had its fair share of Halloween movies and specials, with most featuring a spooky song or two, but none have been as memorable as “Calling All the Monsters.” Initially released in 2011 for a Halloween-themed episode of “A.N.T. Farm,” the track’s thumping instrumental and playful lyrics are a great time.

“Frankenstein” - Rina Sawayama

Though many songs have tried, no track has quite captured the essence

of Frankenstein and his monster like this one. Sawayama’s pop-rock delivery of topics like trauma and self-worth, along with lyrics like “I don’t wanna be a monster anymore,” walks the line between lyrical poetry and Halloween banger. It all comes to an epic conclusion with a masterful drum solo.

“Ghostbusters” - Ray Parker Jr.

One of the most recognizable theme songs in history, the charming yet slightly cheesy “Ghostbusters,” was released in 1984 alongside the film of the same name. Acting as a long-form ad for the fictional group, the track is one of the ‘80s best earworms and is sure to get anyone in the Halloween spirit.

“Disturbia” - Rihanna

Serving as the third and final single from her 2008 album “Good Girl Gone Bad: Reloaded,” Rihanna’s “Disturbia” has slowly become more and more of a Halloween hit. While the song’s lyrics never directly mention the holiday, the imagery they evoke is nothing short of haunting.

“Thriller” - Michael Jackson

One of the most iconic songs ever, “Thriller,” has been frightening audiences since its 1982 release. Over a runtime of almost six minutes, Jackson delivers lyrics filled with classic horror tropes on an instrumental produced by the legendary Quincy Jones. The track is not complete, however, without its equally iconic outro spoken by Vincent Price.

Icon of the Week:

Stephen King



Credit Kevin Payravi

The *Daily’s* icon of the week is prolific American horror writer Stephen King, notoriously coined as the “King of Horror.”

King was born in Portland, Maine, on Sept. 24, 1947, to a traveling vacuum salesman and a healthcare worker. His father divorced his mother when he was 2 years old.

King told Nathaniel Rich for The Paris Review in 2006 that he was “about six or seven” when he started to write novels. Inspired by “Lord of the Flies” (1954), his aunt would pay him 25 cents every time he wrote a book as a way to buy the novels from him.

King attended the University of Maine at Orono, later publishing his debut novel, “Carrie,” in 1974. He would go on to publish countless classics that inspired major Hollywood hits like “The Shining” (1980), “Stand by Me (1986),” “Misery (1990),” “The Shawshank Redemption” (1994), “Dolores Claiborne (1995),” “The Green Mile (1999),” “The Mist (2007),” “It” (2017) and “The Long Walk” (2025).

He was awarded the Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters, a lifetime achievement award, by the National Book Awards in 2003.



Illustration by Thomas Trevino

Set in a world of grimy criminals, ‘Task’ delivers a deeply beautiful season of television

By Carson Kelly
Staff Writer

The world of 2025 HBO crime drama “Tusk” is ever engrossing. The show makes Delaware County, Pennsylvania and all its dirt and gime feel like the center of an expansive universe.

“Task” is showrunner Brad Ingelsby’s second foray into TV and HBO following “Mare of Easttown” (2021). Ingelsby had spent the last decade writing and producing films such as “Out of the Furnace” (2013) and “The Way Back” (2010). Like his previous projects, Ingelsby shows his ability to write an array of complex and flawed characters in “Task,” coming to a close on Oct. 19.

“Task” is a cat-and-mouse crime thriller between three parties vying for the edge over the others, with thief Robbie Pendergrast (Tom Pelphrey), at the center, who delivers an outstanding performance. Stealing drug money from the controlling biker gang of the area, the Dark Hearts, the situation spirals out of control, and the FBI gets involved. Leading the FBI task force is Tom Brandis (Mark Ruffalo), who delivers an excellent performance.

Pelphrey, with a resume spanning two decades, gives a career-defining performance. Pendergrast is a broken man, and Pelphrey manages to swim in deep emotional waters without drowning. He can shift from fear and agony to prideful joy with just a glance. There is an extensive pain within his character, and Pelphrey conveys that every second of the show’s runtime.

Not to be outdone by Pelphrey, Ruffalo shines as well. His character is a former Catholic priest turned FBI agent, rocked by a recent family tragedy. Ruffalo shows an

uncanny ability to draw sympathy from the viewer, making the viewer want to help him up when he stumbles.

Ruffalo and Pelphrey are surrounded by a supporting cast that thrives on being on the sidelines of the show. Fabien Frankel, Emilia Jones, Alison Oliver and Jamie McShane give complex performances that help round out the plot in terrific ways.

Both Frankel and Oliver are handed to Ruffalo for the task force. It is the classic plot of disappointing agents who slowly become competent over time, which works great. Frankel can show off his wealth of charm, and Oliver’s character, Elizabeth Stover, is an awkward agent who the viewer falls in love with as the character gains more confidence.

McShane delivers a stone-faced coldness as the leader of the Dark Hearts in the area. Unnerving in every scene he is in, the viewer is unable to see any humanity in his eyes when he is dead serious.

However, with so many dynamic characters, some are bound to be left behind at times. Ingelsby ultimately lands the plane on every character arc, but the journey to get there can get lost in the shuffle.

The plot of Ruffalo’s character and the family tragedy that shatters him gets put on the back burner too many times to build momentum. Every time the viewer sees him and his two daughters, played by Silvia Dionicio and Phoebe Fox, the show does such a great job of inviting the viewer into the world that it is hard to leave once the show reaches its conclusion.

The main character of the show is Delaware County. The region stretches from the outskirts of Philadelphia to Wilmington, Delaware. Ingelsby manages to balance the area’s simple

beauty with the rotting, broken homes of a working-class community left behind.

The ending gives the viewers a fulfilling, almost perfect climax. Feeling self-contained, it still leaves the door open for a possible

second season in the world set up through seven episodes.

Carson’s rating: 4.5/5



Illustration by Victoria Maldonado

North Texas softball builds relationships on and off the field under new leadership

SOFTBALL continued from page 1

“We don’t want to just keep jabbing. We want to throw the haymaker and just keep coming at you,” White said. “We want to steal bags, we want to play hard and run bases hard. We want to get in and out, we want to lay out, we want to chest up the balls, all of those things. We’re just training that right now in practice and kind of changing the approach.”

Constructing a roster of 11 returners and 11 newcomers to this new, fast way of play was a “big challenge” for the Mean Green throughout the fall. Over the past few weeks, the once “shaky” process of altering the team’s on-field identity has taken a monumental step forward.

Along with White came new personnel around him, a supporting cast that has helped him break the mold. Assistant coach and recruiting coordinator Jon Hunter is no stranger to White’s system, tagging along to North Texas after spending 12 seasons at UCO with the head coach.

Former North Texas letter winner Casady Webb accompanies Hunter as an assistant coach, a former Broncho who spent two years under White. Coined as “a coach on the field when [he] coached her” by White, Webb fits right into the staff.

Rounding out leadership is pitching coach McKenzie Onyango, a face Mean Green fans are all too familiar with. Onyango currently ranks in the top 10 of seven career pitching categories for the Mean Green, posting a 2.04 ERA and 25 wins in her two-year stint in Denton from 2023-2024.



Head coach Cody White signals to the dugout during the first pitch scrimmage at Lovelace Stadium on Sept. 14, 2025. **Photo by Katie Brackens**

Although fresh on the coaching scene, the former Oklahoma Gatorade Softball Player of the Year lowered Dodge City Community College’s team earned run average by 63 percent from the previous year. She also helped more than double their recorded strikeouts, with a pitching staff mainly comprised of collegiate rookies.

Losing five of seven pitchers to the transfer portal or graduation, the North Texas bullpen poses a similar territory for Onyango. So far, however, her tutelage continues to make a difference across her pitching staff.

“I absolutely love her,” Lewinski said. “She’s so positive, she keeps things fun, she keeps us

loose in the bullpen, but most importantly, she pushes us. She sees each and every one of our potential, and she keeps pushing us every single day to get it out.”

In just the fall season, it is evident that North Texas softball trusts in one another and what they are building. They show up for each other, and they make a case to show up on the field in a big way come the start of the spring season.

“I think the sky is the limit for this team,” Lewinski said. “[...] We’ve kind of flipped the switch and people are starting to see what we can do. I think this team can do really great things because everyone’s bought in.”

Athlete of the Week:

Drew Mestemaker



Credit **Mean Green Sports**

The 608-passing-yard performance by redshirt freshman quarterback Drew Mestemaker set North Texas and American Conference single-game records and was the single highest by a Football Bowl Subdivision quarterback since 2020. He achieved several records against the University of North Carolina at Charlotte who they beat 54-20 on Oct. 24. Mestemaker was awarded numerous accolades for his performance, including the Associated Press National Player of the Week and the American Conference Player of the Week. Currently, he sits second in the nation in passing yards with 2,468 and is tied for fourth in passing touchdowns with 21. He is the only freshman in the nation’s top 10 leading passers, with the next youngest passer being sophomore Duke quarterback Darian Mensah at No. 8.

At a Glance:

Football

At 11 a.m. the day after Halloween, North Texas football (7-1, 3-1 American Conference) will face the Navy Midshipmen (7-0, 5-0 American) on Nov. 1. The Mean Green are coming off a 54-20 dominant win over Charlotte (1-7, 0-5 American) while the Midshipmen are arriving in Denton after a 42-32 win over Florida Atlantic University (3-5, 2-3 American). The game will potentially have American Championship implications as both teams sit amid atop the conference standings.

Volleyball

Smack dab on Halloween night is a spooky showdown between North Texas volleyball (17-5, 7-3 American) and the University of Memphis (10-15, 1-9 American) at 6 p.m. The Tigers have one game against the University of Alabama-Birmingham (8-14, 1-9 American) on Oct. 29 before they visit the UNT Volleyball Center. Memphis is currently on a four-game losing streak before its games against UAB and the Mean Green.

Cross Country

The American Conference Championship is quickly approaching for North Texas cross country who will compete in Charlotte, North Carolina, on Nov. 1. Following the championship, the team will have the NCAA South Central Regional on Nov. 14 to conclude the cross country season.

North Texas football faces Navy in high-stakes conference matchup

By **Ian Pfaffenberger**
Staff Writer

Following a record-setting performance against the University of North Carolina at Charlotte (1-7, 0-5 American Conference), North Texas football will face the Navy Midshipmen in a match with major implications in the American Conference Championship race.

Redshirt freshman quarterback Drew Mestemaker put on a show for the ages against Charlotte, throwing for 608 yards and four touchdowns. His passing total set both North Texas (7-1, 3-1 American) and American Conference single-game records, and ranks as the 17th highest mark in a game in Football Bowl Subdivision history.

“I think Drew just continues to become a phenomenal story all across America, and rightfully so,” head coach Eric Morris said. “I mean, here’s a kid that continues to get better each and every week, continues to grow, and so it was definitely his best passing performance.”

As a team, the Mean Green put up 754 yards of offense, the second-highest total in program history.

The yardage was bolstered by Mestemaker and a trio of receivers in sophomore Wyatt Young, junior Landon Sides and senior Cameron Dörner. Each had at least five receptions and 100 yards receiving. Young and Dörner also contributed touchdowns of 70 and 41 yards, respectively.

The wide receivers also had 395 yards after catch, the highest total for an FBS team this season. Georgia Tech (8-0, 5-0 Atlantic Coast Conference) is the only other team with more than 300 in a game this year.

“I feel special to be a part of a game like that for Drew,” Young said.

“Throwing 608 passing yards was just wild. Hearing that after the game, I was super happy for him. [...] Being part of a record-breaking game like that is always special to be a part of.”

With just four games left, the upcoming match against Navy (7-0, 5-0 American) shapes up to be the biggest game of the year for the team in terms of conference championship contention.

While the match against South Florida (6-2, 3-1) seemed to carry higher stakes for the Mean Green, results like the Bulls’ 34-31 loss to Memphis (7-1, 3-1) have made the race to the top of the conference all the more convoluted.

The American has proved to be a gauntlet this year, bolstering the undefeated Midshipmen and hoisting five other teams with a 3-1 conference record or better.

Subsequently, it has become more critical than ever for the Mean Green to

win the rest of its games to have a chance at a championship berth.

“I was texting the other day, ‘I don’t even know who we want to beat who at this point,’” Morris said. “And so obviously, if we don’t do our job, then none of those things come to life for us.”

The Midshipmen sail into Denton for a post-Halloween clash, sporting the most rushing yards per game in the FBS and sitting at third in the American in points allowed per game. They also received 86 votes in the Associated Press Top 25 poll, the most among non-ranked teams before this week.

“[Head coach Brian] Newberry does a phenomenal job,” Morris said. “Since he’s taken over this program [...], you’ve seen the strides in this team. I mean, they were topping the country last year rushing the football, [they’re] creative [and they] find ways to get all these

playmakers different touches throughout the game.”

Navy’s offensive scheme mirrors that of conference opponent Army (3-4, 2-3), as both teams run a triple-option style offense.

Senior quarterback Blake Horvath has taken charge of the unit, leading the team in rushing and passing yards while sitting atop the American in scoring.

“He’s a great player [and] he’s a good leader,” junior linebacker Ethan Wesloski said. “He does a good job getting his offense in the right calls at the right time, and I think for us, we have to find a way to minimize him. He’s going to make some plays, and we have to respond to it.”

North Texas, however, enters the game with a distinct advantage. Having faced Army in Week 4, the Mean Green are already familiar with Navy’s similar triple-option offense and have been preparing accordingly.

“Army and Navy aren’t exactly the same [...], but being able to read and react from the Army game, the tempo of the Army game is going to allow us to be able to execute our jobs a little bit smoother,” Wesloski said. “But the big thing is we just got to swarm the ball like a pack of pterodactyls and just come around and just execute our game.”

With the uncertainty of how conference standings will shake out in the final four games of the season, North Texas’ mission of taking the process week by week has become more prevalent than ever.

“I think the team’s really rooted on just winning every game,” Young said. “I think we’re determined to show the world what we can really do, and that we’re a serious football team and that people need to take us serious.”



Redshirt freshman quarterback Drew Mestemaker celebrates in the end zone against UTSA at DATCU Stadium on Oct. 18, 2025. **Photo by Ismael Beltran**

Indiana University infringed on students' First Amendment rights by censoring the school paper

By Robert Trevino
Staff Writer

The Indiana Daily Student came under controversy when their staff ran news stories in its homecoming issue after the university told the student paper to limit news stories to online publication. This action resulted in the school scrapping the publication's ability to print new issues and in the firing of the Director of Student Media, Jim Rodenbush, after he refused to censor the paper.

Student journalists and publications should be able to run university papers as they see fit and cover whatever topics they deem newsworthy — unrestricted and uncensored by a university's board or faculty.

Rodenbush, who also served as the faculty advisor, was informed during a series of meetings with administrators at The Media School that print editions were not expected to include a news section because of financial issues surrounding the paper. However, the school was allowed to release seven papers a semester tied to local school events.

Rodenbush relayed the content change to IDS's staff, but as their faculty advisor, left the decision to run news up to the students.

IU sent an email to Rodenbush on Oct. 14, ordering the paper to halt production immediately. When he refused to relay the message, David Tolchinsky, the dean of the IU Media



Illustration by Finn Collins

School, fired Rodenbush, citing his lack of leadership and refusal to adhere to the university's decisions.

Rodenbush defended his actions and pointed out that he could not make editorial decisions because the newspaper's publication is supposed to be in the students' hands alone.

This is supported by the court case Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier, in which a high school student in Missouri wanted to run stories about teen pregnancy. The courts ruled that schools can censor students' work, but only if the work is not written in a "designated public forum."

A designated public forum is established when a government institution, such as a university, allows students to make editorial decisions for a student newspaper.

Once that control has been given to the students, it cannot be ripped away. IU is now censoring these students and possibly infringing on their First Amendment rights.

IDS Co-Editor-in-Chief Andrew Miller said he views the moves as a deliberate "scare tactic" aimed at the paper and those involved. In a letter from the editors, he and Mia Hilkowitz, co-editor-in-chief, wrote that the move is not just about removing their ability to print physical papers, but rather a breach of editorial independence.

"If IU decides certain types of content are 'bad for business,' what stops them from prohibiting stories that hold them to account on our other platforms?" Hilkowitz and Miller said in the letter.

Recently, the IDS has reported many controversial news stories, including one about plagiarism allegations in IU President Pamela Whitten's dissertation. Another is about a former professor's home being raided by the FBI after accusations of stealing federal funds.

Rodenbush said these meetings to remove news from physical copies began only after some of the more controversial stories were published.

School officials argued that their decision to cut the print edition of the paper was solely financial. IU's actions lean toward censorship, given that fall advertising and printing have already been paid for the semester and the paper has generated \$11,000 in profit from its previous three editions.

These moves by IU are not only harmful to student journalists but also to the community. Local papers have been dying off in record numbers since the pandemic, and in some communities, student papers pick up the slack by reporting local news.

According to Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism, 1,524 counties in the United States are considered "news deserts," meaning they have one or no local newspapers. Student journalists have helped lighten that load. In 2023, it was estimated that 2,000 student reporters put out over 10,000 stories in local outlets.

This helps communities stay in touch without the heavy financial burden that can come with news

outlets, and benefits older adults who do not prefer to get their news online.

Limiting students' ability to report news will cause a monoculture of ideas. Universities are places to learn and grow into individual people, not indoctrination factories that teach everyone to think the same. Administrators hinder students by censoring student publications.

Student journalists being censored by the institutions that are supposed to support them is wrong and a failure of higher education. Universities should support their emerging journalists' First Amendment rights and incorporate them into the journalistic training they teach.

These institutions are training the next generation of journalists, and instead of restricting coverage, they should trust their own students to make editorial decisions that keep the public well-informed.

Faculty members of The Media School should support their student journalists during this time, as should organizations like the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, which advocates on behalf of reporters. The RCFP is currently representing the IDS co-editors-in-chief and working toward protecting the student reporter's press freedoms.

If this blatant censorship of student media goes unchecked and these emerging reporters are not advocated for, the future of journalism and the public's ability to stay informed about news and current events will falter.

The Trump administration is misusing military assets and materials

By Joseph Neuenschwander
Staff Writer

The Trump administration is wasting federal funds on the president's projects, specifically through its deployment of the National Guard. This pattern of misusing governmental assets shows a blatant disregard for both taxpayer money and public resources.

President Donald Trump and his administration's misuse of assets has been a prominent issue throughout his time in office, dating back to his first term.

According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, in 2024 alone, \$872 billion in United States tax dollars were spent on defense.

In the past month, the National Guard's presence has expanded to multiple cities — Los Angeles, Washington, D.C., Chicago, Memphis, Tennessee and Portland, Oregon — with the intention of reducing high crime rates. This expansion has continued this week, with further development of the Guard's presence ongoing.

However, in August, when Trump deployed the National Guard to the district and declared a "crime emergency," National Guard members stated they had not seen "emergency" levels of crime" upon arriving at the scene.

The Trump administration's decision to deploy the National Guard to Washington cost over \$1 million a day on travel, food and fuel for the vehicles. In contrast to Trump's claims of crime increasing in the city, the district's crime rates have actually been gradually declining since the 1990s, and were at a 30-year low at the time of deployment.

This left the deployed National Guard members with nothing to do but clean the streets of Washington with orders to perform

landscaping work, such as cleaning up trash and spreading mulch.

These National Guard members, deployed for what Trump deemed to be "intolerable risks," actually ended up spreading 997 cubic yards of mulch and clearing 964 bags of trash. Typically, these responsibilities are overseen by the National Park Service or the district's government, but the NPS has been struggling to make ends meet due to a severe shortage of staff and deepening budget cuts.

Landscaping is a misuse of the National Guard, whose mission includes responding to disasters and maintaining peace during civil unrest. They are also federally funded with taxpayer dollars, and the deployment of the National Guard to Washington is projected to cost Americans \$201 million. National Guard members' time is better spent training for responding to national emergencies than doing chores.

It is not only the National Guard that is being ordered around by the whims of politicians. In September, Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth summoned high-ranking military officers from all branches to deliver a speech concerning diversity, equity and inclusion.

Some of the generals and admirals who came to this speech were stationed across the world and had to fly to Virginia for a speech about "wokeness." The event cost American taxpayers roughly \$6 million. While there is not much information on how much flights cost, government officials said it cost millions to fly all the soldiers to where the event was held.

Some meeting attendees said it "could have been an email." An email would be more efficient for the military officials who have more significant duties to attend to, rather than having



Illustration by Victoria Maldonado and Mekielle Vaughn

to be lectured on things they already know, like facial hair standards.

"It's completely unacceptable to see fat generals and admirals in the halls of the Pentagon," Hegseth said during his speech. "We're going to cut our hair, shave our beards and adhere to standards. [...] No more beards."

None of these circumstances shows a good use of, nor even proper consideration, for taxpayer dollars and government resources. Instead of wasting American citizens' money on false threats and political speeches, this money could

be reinvested in issues affecting the nation's forces, such as the historically declining military recruitment numbers.

Trump's disregard for the military forces of this nation costs taxpayers money and also acts as a disservice to the National Guard members who have to leave their families by answering the call to serve. The commander of the armed forces and his staff should value the time and effort of the nation's military instead of treating them as political instruments out of respect for them and the citizens whose money they run on.